

## CA's Mainframe 2.0: Something Blue, Something New

Over the last few weeks, CA has made several announcements about its new initiative, Mainframe 2.0, aimed at helping users achieve "Lean IT" via mainframe software upgrades. These announcements include infusing CA's large array of mainframe software with Electronic Software Delivery (enabling utility-driven installation) and the arrival of CA Mainframe Software Manager (MSM), aimed at automating both installation and maintenance; Best Practices Guides, Interoperability Certification (with other CA mainframe products) and integration with the IBM Health Checker for z/OS framework (utilities checking the effectiveness of operational CA mainframe software); and the Mainframe Value Program and Mainframe Solution Center for customer support. CA also announced CA Compliance Manager for z/OS security/compliance policy management, the first new product that is MSM-compliant out-of-the-box.

What is striking about these announcements, in my opinion, is a significant shift in CA's focus. In most briefings from CA over the past 15 years, presenters de-emphasized CA's massive stockpile of mainframe software and focused on other platforms or on global solutions in which no specific platform stood out. Recently, the emphasis has been on the mainframe side of the business. For example, CA's recent announcement of fiscal 2009 financial results paid particular attention to the company's success in mainframe-related sales. What's going on here?

### *The Once and Future Platform*

The first point to be made about CA's new products and emphasis is that they reflect the increasing importance mainframe-based strategies are making to IT professionals and organizations. While I have touched on the advantages of these strategies multiple times, it is still worth listing some of them again:

- Consolidating more than 20 applications on the mainframe via virtualization and specialty processors demonstrates significant advantages in TCO over both UNIX and Wintel architectures, a real plus in tough economic times.
- The advent of "hub" architectures in which distributed applications gravitate to the best-suited platform has helped fuel greater mainframe workloads, e.g., for data management and security.
- Concerns about data-center power consumption and carbon footprint have caused reassessment of the mainframe's ability to cut energy costs via sophisticated monitoring and design plus avoidance of the multi-machine/component redundancy and low system utilization common in x86 environments.
- As a result of the mainframe's "new" value-add, today's IT much more rarely has to deal with concerns (voiced today mainly by IBM competitors) that "the mainframe is

dead". Instead, the new concern is that today's mainframe administrators are beginning to retire.

So CA's new focus is a reasonable response to a new customer need: to optimize and extend long-term mainframe-focused IT strategies.

### ***The Right Foundation at the Right Time***

The second point to make about CA's new products and focus is that the company's mainframe software portfolio puts it in a unique position to enhance the offerings of Big Blue (IBM). CA's administrative mainframe tools and utilities have long been known as sophisticated solutions for complex tasks. CA also has extensive mainframe data management and data administration experience and expertise via CA IDMS and CA Datacom. CA's security solutions (ACF2 and Top Secret) are often mentioned by IT in the same breath as IBM's RACF, as the pinnacle of IT security effectiveness. And the sheer breadth of CA mainframe tools amazes: quality and testing tools, data transport utilities, database management (administration), enterprise reporting, library management, e-mail, sort, network management, output management, resource management, security, session management, software change management, storage management, systems management, workload automation, and "miscellaneous".

The rest of CA has something to contribute, as well. Over the last few years, CA has created ties between its distributed solutions and its mainframe tools, so that, for example, the mainframe can be part of highly integrated, optimized cross-organization, cross-platform systems administration.

### ***CA Value-Add***

Beyond the litany of new products and upgrades, there seem to be two common themes to all aspects of CA's Mainframe 2.0: automation and efficiency. First, CA focuses on key pain points of complex mainframe implementation and management tasks, looking to re-direct what has been done in the past by mainframe experts to automated software solutions and to less-trained personnel. Second, the products take a holistic approach that delivers the most efficient result – the one with the least cost, highest performance, and/or shortest time to value.

Overall, CA makes a strong case for the Mainframe 2.0 products that evidence this approach. CA has 3 decades of experience in the intricacies of critical mainframe tasks such as job scheduling and batching, log management and dump analysis to draw on in identifying key automation opportunities and efficiencies.

### ***Conclusions***

The sub-text of CA's announcements, therefore, is that the mainframe is not only here to stay, but is potentially a critical success factor in achieving the kind of major reduction of overall IT cost structure needed to survive a brutal recession. In addition, the company is emphasizing that, as a premier supplier of cross-platform "hub"-architecture administrative software and a tool vendor ubiquitous in mainframe sites, it can deliver the kind of automation and efficiency necessary to help large enterprises achieve dramatic cost reductions.

The announcements also raise the question of what comes next. Further integration with CA's global architecture (e.g., further ITIL support and cross-platform repositories) would seem logical. Additional development of cross-platform "veneers" that minimize the differences between Unix/Linux and mainframe administration would certainly be of use. With such a foundation in place, CA can add further value in quite a few areas. In other words, this is not only something Blue (Big Blue, that is) – the mainframe – but also something New – new capabilities to handle unprecedented emerging customer needs.

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